



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
DIOCESE OF  
WORCESTER

# Flourishing in Ministry



Ideas, advice and support for lay and ordained ministers



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*With thanks to the Diocese of Oxford  
who produced a Flourishing in Ministry  
document on which this one is based*

## Introduction

Awareness of the need to focus on personal resilience and wellbeing is at an all-time high. In 2019 the General Synod of the Church of England voted overwhelmingly to support a new way of improving the approach to the care and well-being of clergy across the Church and in February 2020 it proclaimed and affirmed The Covenant for Clergy Care and Well-Being in an Act of Synod. It invites parishes, dioceses and the wider church, as well as individual clergy, to share responsibility.

What this seeks to do is to create greater awareness of issues of clergy care and wellbeing across the whole church. We believe that, when we care for and are accountable to one another, when we take some time to reflect on our own situation and needs, and when we are able to enter openly into dialogue with both the local and wider church about their well-being, this is a blessing for the whole church.

Whilst the Covenant for Clergy Care and Well-being is focussed on ordained ministers, this booklet is intended as a practical resource for all those exercising licensed lay and ordained ministry in the Diocese of Worcester. It supplements existing provision for the support and wellbeing of ministers, sitting alongside online resources, including the Clergy Support pages on the diocesan website. We hope that these resources will help to articulate principles that promote ministerial flourishing and support every minister to thrive in their life and ministry.



## A foreword from Bishop John

When Jesus is asked which commandment is the greatest, he responds: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind ... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' God, neighbour, self: in my experience it is the last of these three that followers of Jesus find most problematic. After all, does not Jesus also speak of denying oneself, even of dying to self? Yet I do not see this as contradictory or even paradoxical: rather, I understand Jesus to be expressing a distinction between two kinds of love of self. One kind can be characterised as narcissistic, self-seeking, selfish: this leads to sterility, loneliness and even self-destruction. However, love of neighbour and of self which is rooted in the love of God is compassionate, outward looking, generous: it enables flourishing, community and life in full abundance.

Each individual follower of Jesus has a unique calling, each will have to be guided by the Spirit to respond to these commandments in their own individual way. It's wise to be aware, though, of practical ways of supporting and sustaining oneself in ministry. This handbook is offered to encourage you to continue to develop life-enhancing habits, yes, for your own well-being, as well as the benefit of those among whom you minister. I pray that it will help you 'to keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.' (Acts 20:28)

As you follow Jesus' commandments, may you know his shalom and grow in the knowledge of the God who is love.

## Clergy Care and Wellbeing Covenant

"The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scripture and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in every generation.

In its formularies, the Church of England recognises that God calls men and women to serve as deacons, priests and bishops to build up and equip the whole People of God.

Conscious that such a calling is both a privilege and a demand, **we as the Church of England commit together to promote the welfare of our clergy and their households in terms expressed in the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing.**

**We undertake to work together to seek to coordinate and improve our approach to clergy care and wellbeing that ordained ministers flourish in their service of the mission of God within and beyond the Church."**

## Flourishing in Ministry

Health in ministry is sustained by a healthy prayer life. This is foundational to everything else we do. Being daily, hourly 'in Christ' is what connects us with our calling, gives us a sense of purpose and keeps us going when things are tough. We all need to know that we are loved by God, that we are OK, and it is important that our sense of wellbeing does not depend on the approval or affirmation of others.

Burnout comes not from doing too much but from doing too much that is not meaningful to us. In reality, most of us have to spend some of our time doing things which we find draining or frustrating, but if we spend most of our time in this way, we become exhausted. Making sure that we do enough of what we find life-giving is important in sustaining healthy ministry.

### Each of us needs to develop a pattern for ministry that works for us.

Here are some things ministers can do to care for their ministerial health and development:

- Learn new things
- Talk to supportive colleagues
- Be clear about time off
- Make opportunities for your ministry to be creative
- Take regular and sufficient time for study and Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)
- If at all possible, have access to a reasonable level of competent and regular administrative assistance (paid or voluntary) in the benefice
- Set clear boundaries
- Say "no" more often
- Meet regularly with a trusted person or mentor
- Take a quiet day once a month and spend it out of the parish

**Appendix A** will help you to consider how you feel about your ministry.

**Appendix B** will give you some ideas to help you to flourish in your ministry.

**Appendix D** offers relevant sources of support.

## Flourishing Physically and Mentally

We all know that physical, mental and emotional health are closely linked. Our ability to be resilient in any kind of work context will depend on eating well, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep. It is surprising how hard this can be to do.

Here are some things which other ministers have found helpful:

- Spending time in a place you can relax (eg: the garden)
- Eating well and taking proper meal breaks every day
- Practising mindfulness or contemplative prayer
- Planning for and taking regular non-work time
- Turning the phone off.
- Getting enough sleep
- A vigorous walk and fresh air every day
- Spending time each week on hobbies
- Watching your alcohol intake
- Monitoring how much of your day you spend in front of the computer and taking regular screen breaks

### When we're overwhelmed:

Sometimes life can overwhelm us. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Sometimes we can sort ourselves out relatively quickly. At other times, feeling overwhelmed becomes a regular feature of life. This may be because of particular life circumstances, or because of something else. Either way, that's normally a cue to seek help.

Did you know that your bishop is able to grant you a special period of leave during challenging times, such as moving a parent into a care home and clearing their house, or taking time to be with a child who needs us at an acute, crisis moment?

If you ever find yourself in this situation, please contact your archdeacon or bishop as soon as possible.

**Appendix A** will help you to identify issues that may affect your physical and mental health.

**Appendix C** will give you some ideas to help you to flourish physically and mentally.

**Appendix D** offers relevant sources of support.

## Flourishing Financially and Materially

Our individual financial and material circumstances vary hugely, but it's an area which has a significant impact on clergy wellbeing. Some of us receive a stipend, others offer ministry for no remuneration. Many live in tied accommodation. Some do, and some do not, have a house to retire to.

Other factors which come into play include:

- Whether or not we have a working partner
- Age and needs of dependent children
- Age and needs of elderly relatives
- Whether we rely on a clergy pension in retirement, or can also rely on workplace pensions
- Whether we have savings, and any income from them

**Other ministers have noted how important it is to:**

- Claim full working expenses from the benefice
- Have adequate and well-maintained accommodation
- Know how and when to access financial advice
- Get help with the tax return

***Appendix A** will help you to identify issues that may affect you financially or materially.*

***Appendix D** offers relevant sources of support.*

## Flourishing in Personal Relationships

Each of us needs to develop a pattern for maintaining life-enhancing, supportive relationships that works for us. Some of us are single and need to be able to keep in touch with friends, who may live at a distance. Some have partners, who may themselves have a busy working life. Some have children, at different stages of life, who need different degrees of attention and support. Some of us may be struggling in our relationships.

We probably all know the feeling that we don't see enough of old friends, and if we rarely have more than one day off consecutively, it is hard to get away to do this. And we all know that relationships, whether with family or friends, suffer if they are not fed with attention, presence, communication and time.

**It is good practice to take two consecutive days off at least once a month, so that you can go away overnight, or just to stay at home and have a slightly longer time off duty.**

Here are some things other ministers do to help them develop and maintain their relationships:

- Take time (including occasional overnight stays) away from the benefice to visit family/friends living in different parts of the country
- Always take a regular day off and make sure people know when it is
- Be present to those you spend time with – let the phone go to voicemail
- If you have a partner, schedule a weekly date night
- Spend quality time with someone you care about
- Look out for destructive behaviours that can form when we're stressed.

**Appendix A** will help you to identify issues that may affect your personal relationships.

**Appendix D** offers relevant sources of support.



## When things go wrong

Sometimes it can be difficult to balance or manage the pressures of work and home life and you may be left unable to function at full capacity. Difficulties may arise with your relationship, illness within your family, deterioration in your own physical or mental health, life changes involving children or parents, practical difficulties surrounding your home or your finances, unemployment of a family member. The list is ongoing.

It is important that you know that senior clergy and the HR team at the diocesan office are here to help you should this balance swing. They will be able to provide support and guidance as you work through the issues to rebalance your life.

The Diocesan Counselling Service is also available to you – this is a confidential service aimed to offer support and guidance.

### They will:

- Respect your individual dignity and privacy – to ensure that sensitive information of any kind, including medical information, will only be shared with relevant people.
- Provide quality pastoral and practical care – to ensure that contact is maintained and, if appropriate, referrals and links be provided at appropriate times.
- If appropriate, seek medical reports and professional advice – to ensure practical advice, suggestions and recommendations can be considered in a timely fashion to enable you to return to full capacity as quickly and as safely as possible.
- Offer appropriate financial support – to ensure the payment of your stipend and to advise on cases of hardship.
- Be flexible and focus on you to help pace and shape your return to work and help you structure your schedule and workload in such a way to enable maximum flexibility as you return to full capacity.
- Provide you with information and support – to seek out information that may help you and, where appropriate and wanted, to put you in touch with others known to us who may have knowledge of/been through similar circumstances and can offer support.
- Help explain your circumstances to those who need to know or may notice your absence.

**For further information regarding the supportive management of absence please contact a member of the HR Team ([hrteam@cofe-worcester.org.uk](mailto:hrteam@cofe-worcester.org.uk))**



## Appendices

All aspects of wellbeing are interlinked, but looking at them **separately** can help us to focus on what might need changes or adjustment.

While there's no "one-size-fits-all" picture of what is a healthy and thriving ministry and minister, it is important to develop a pattern of prayer, work and rest which works for you. It should be a rhythm that is resilient and one that can adapt to changing pressures and circumstances.

In the next few pages you will find resources and ideas to help you to develop, maintain and improve this rhythm together with sources of support for you and your family.

### **We encourage all licensed ministers to care for their wellbeing by:**

- developing a healthy and sustainable rhythm of prayer, work and rest
- acknowledging the needs and legitimate claims of your families and friends
- reflecting on what will sustain you in your life and roles, seeking out and using appropriate resources
- having a point of accountability to ensure that God is honoured in the way you inhabit your role
- remaining alert to the continuing invitation of God to explore your calling.

### **Senior staff are committed to modelling healthy rhythms of prayer, work and leisure. They also want to support and encourage ministers in self-care through diocesan structures and resources by:**

- challenging the culture of expectation of clergy overworking and limitless availability wherever it is encountered
- providing training, support, development opportunities and other resources for ministers in accessible and timely ways.

### **Parishes, benefices and deaneries are encouraged to support the flourishing of their ministers by:**

- supporting, upholding and praying for them
- understanding the dimensions of the role and the demands it places on ministers and their families
- understanding ministry as a vocation, not a job, and developing realistic expectations about workload and availability.

## Appendix A Some things to think about

Take a moment to answer these questions honestly, then make a diary note to return to the page in a month or two to see what has improved:

### Flourishing in Ministry

- How do you feel about your ministry? Is this as you want it to be?

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### Flourishing Physically and Mentally

- When and how often are you able to shut off from work completely?

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- What are the things that nurture and sustain you at these times?

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- How well do you sleep, and is it enough?

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- Do you take time to eat regular and healthy meals and do you take regular exercise?  
If not, what would help you to start?

.....

- Do you have a long-term health concern that affects your quality of life?  
What adjustments could be made to help you?

.....

- When did you last turn off your mobile phone for 24 hours, or longer.

.....

# Appendix A

## Flourishing Financially and Materially

- Is your accommodation a source of stress? Are there simple adjustments you could make?  
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- If you live in church housing, which parts of your home remain private and are never used for ministry? Is it time to establish some boundaries?  
.....
- If you live in church housing, have you started to make provision for your retirement?  
.....
- Is your income adequate for you to maintain an acceptable quality of life?  
.....
- Are your expenses for ministry fully reimbursed?  
.....
- How is your training and retreat provision funded?  
.....
- Have you got sufficient financial cover for critical illness or unexpected life events?  
.....

## Flourishing in Personal Relationships

- What is your pattern for spending time with those you are close to?  
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- Particularly if you live alone, how often do you set aside enough time to visit family and friends?  
.....
- Do you communicate with those you love about the things that really matter?  
.....

## What are the areas you need to pay more attention to?

Use the following pages to help you.

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## Appendix B Ideas to help you to flourish in ministry

### Making a Plan

Write down what you would like to get done in the short, medium and long term, and make sure that the urgent doesn't always displace the important.

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Who in your support network could help you to achieve any changes that are needed?

Spiritual director .....	A trusted peer .....
Soul friend .....	Cell group contact .....
Ministry accompanier.....	Pastoral supervisor .....
Confessor .....	Prayer partner .....

## Appendix C Flourishing Physically and Mentally

Did you know that the 2002 report Affirmation and Accountability, published by the Society of Mary and Martha, suggested an upper limit of 50 hours and a lower limit of 38 hours a week for full-time ministers? Of course, there is often no such thing as a normal week, but it is a good idea to keep an eye on how your hours average out over a week or a month.

### Why not start keeping a note of the hours you work?

Depending on the formalities of the way each minister exercises ministry, provisions for rest and annual leave feature in several documents, such as Statements of Particulars (SoPs), Role Descriptions, Learning or Working Agreements.

- Do you know what provisions are in place for you and are you making the most of them?

### Good practice is ...

- making sure you take at least one 24-hour period of rest from ministry on a regular day each week
- working an average of no more than 48 hours each week, in line with standard working times regulations
- taking an annual retreat of approximately 5 working days (pro rata)
- taking your full annual leave entitlement of 36 days, including 4-6 Sundays (pro rata).

Which of these do you do or, more tellingly, not do? How will you ensure this year will be different?

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## Flourishing in Ministry

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)	All ministers except curates-in-training	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/continuing-ministerial-education/training@cofe-worcester.org.uk">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/continuing-ministerial-education/training@cofe-worcester.org.uk</a>
IME Part 2 programme	Curates-in-training	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> Particularly the Director of Ordinands: jfitzmaurice@cofe-worcester.org.uk
Clarity of expectation in SoPs and working agreements	All ministers	<b>Your archdeacon</b> <b>Human Resources</b> hrteam@cofe-worcester.org.uk
Sabbaticals	All ministers	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/continuing-ministerial-education/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/continuing-ministerial-education/</a>
Individual or team ministry accompaniment (eg work consultancy, mentoring, coaching)	All ministers	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> Particularly the Director of Ministry and Discipleship jkimber@cofe-worcester.org.uk
Consultancy for personal and parish development	All ministers	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> Particularly the Director of Ministry and Discipleship jkimber@cofe-worcester.org.uk
Peer reflection and support	All clergy	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> Particularly the Director of Ministry and Discipleship jkimber@cofe-worcester.org.uk
Training and development for ministry	All clergy	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> Particularly the Director of Ministry and Discipleship jkimber@cofe-worcester.org.uk
Work supervision / consultation	All clergy	<b>Diocesan Counselling Service</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/</a>
Reflective practice groups	All clergy	<b>Diocesan Counselling Service</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/</a>

## Flourishing Physically and Mentally

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Individual medical consultations	All ordained clergy	<b>St Luke's Healthcare for Clergy</b> <a href="http://www.stlukesforclergy.org.uk">www.stlukesforclergy.org.uk</a>
Health checkup	Anyone aged 40-74	<b>NHS health check</b> <a href="http://www.healthcheck.nhs.uk">www.healthcheck.nhs.uk</a>
Safeguarding advice and training	All ministers and their families	<b>Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/safeguarding/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/safeguarding/</a> <a href="mailto:hhigton@cofe-worcester.org.uk">hhigton@cofe-worcester.org.uk</a>
Clergy HR advice and support	All ministers and their families	<b>Diocesan Human Resources</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/people-and-places/diocesan-office/hr-team/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/people-and-places/diocesan-office/hr-team/</a> <a href="mailto:hrteam@cofe-worcester.org.uk">hrteam@cofe-worcester.org.uk</a>
Pastoral support	All ministers and their families	<b>Your bishop, archdeacon, Rural Dean, Deanery Lay Chair or deanery chapter</b>
Retreat centres	All ministers and their families	<b>Holland House and various religious communities</b> <a href="http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/faith-and-life/spirituality-and-prayer/planning-retreat">www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/faith-and-life/spirituality-and-prayer/planning-retreat</a>
Retreat centre specialising in wellbeing in ministry	All ministers and their families	<b>Sheldon Retreat Centre</b> <a href="http://www.sheldon.uk.com">www.sheldon.uk.com</a> 01647 252752 <a href="mailto:smm@sheldon.uk.com">smm@sheldon.uk.com</a>
Confidential online forum for clergy	All ordained clergy	<b>The Sheldon Hub</b> <a href="http://www.sheldonthub.org">www.sheldonthub.org</a>
Referral to confidential counselling/therapeutic support	All ministers and their families	<b>Bishops Advisor in Pastoral Care and Counselling</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/</a>
Resilience training	All ministers	<b>Your archdeacon or Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> Particularly the Director of Ministry and Discipleship <a href="mailto:jkimber@cofe-worcester.org.uk">jkimber@cofe-worcester.org.uk</a>
Useful reading for mental health	All ministers	<i>Overcoming Anxiety</i> by Helen Kennerley
Clergy Holiday Fund	Eligible clergy	<a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/clergy-holiday-fund/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/clergy-holiday-fund/</a>
Alcohol Addiction	All	<a href="http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/">www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/</a>
Drug Addiction	All	<a href="http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/drug-addiction-getting-help/">www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/drug-addiction-getting-help/</a>
Eating Disorders	All	<a href="http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Eating-disorders/">www.nhs.uk/conditions/Eating-disorders/</a>

## Appendix D Sources of Support

### Financial and material flourishing

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
CMD grants	All ministers except curates in training	<b>Ministry and Discipleship Team</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/continuing-ministerial-education/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/continuing-ministerial-education/</a>
Other grant making bodies	All ministers	<b>Your archdeacon</b>
Housing maintenance	Stipendiary and House for Duty ministers	<b>Parsonages</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/people-and-places/diocesan-office/parsonages-dept/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/people-and-places/diocesan-office/parsonages-dept/</a>
Housing concerns (security, suitability, etc.)	Stipendiary and House for Duty ministers	<b>Your archdeacon</b>
Pensions advice and forecasts	All stipendiary ministers	<b>Pensions board</b> Search 'churchofengland-pensions- board' 020 7898 1000 <a href="mailto:pensions@churchofengland.org">pensions@churchofengland.org</a>
Retirement housing advice		
Debt management and money advice	All ministers	<b>Christians Against Poverty</b> <a href="http://www.capuk.org">www.capuk.org</a> <b>Money Advisory Service</b> <a href="http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk">www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk</a>
Your rights and responsibilities	All ministers	<b>Citizens Advice</b> <a href="http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk">www.citizensadvice.org.uk</a>
Gambling addiction	All ministers	<b>Gamblers Anonymous</b> <a href="http://www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk">www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk</a>
Supporting the wellbeing of clergy	Anglican clergy and their families	<b>Clergy Support Trust</b> <a href="http://www.clergysupport.org.uk">www.clergysupport.org.uk</a>
Grants for people in need	Clergy	<b>CPAS</b> <a href="http://www.cpas.org.uk/advice-and-support#.Xiheev77SUk">www.cpas.org.uk/advice-and-support#.Xiheev77SUk</a>
Help with childcare costs	All clergy	<a href="https://www.churchofengland.org/more/clergy-resources/clergy-payroll/help-childcare-costs">https://www.churchofengland.org/more/clergy-resources/clergy-payroll/help-childcare-costs</a>
Car loans	Eligible clergy	<a href="http://www.churchesmutual.co.uk">www.churchesmutual.co.uk</a>
Access to grants	Public body	<a href="http://www.turn2us.org.uk/">www.turn2us.org.uk/</a>
Grants for people facing hardship	Public Body	<b>The Elizabeth Finn Trust</b> <a href="http://www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support/Turn2us-Funds/Turn2us-Elizabeth-Finn-Fund">www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support/Turn2us-Funds/Turn2us-Elizabeth-Finn-Fund</a>



### Flourishing in personal relationships

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Confidential counselling / therapeutic support	All ministers and their families	<b>Bishops Advisor in Pastoral Care and Counselling</b> <a href="https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/">https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/diocesan-compendium/ministry/diocesan-counselling-service/</a>
Retreat centre specialising in wellbeing in ministry	All ministers and their families	<b>Sheldon Retreat Centre</b> <a href="http://www.sheldon.uk.com">www.sheldon.uk.com</a> 01647 252752
Confidential online forum for clergy	All ordained clergy	<b>The Sheldon Hub</b> <a href="http://www.sheldonthub.org">www.sheldonthub.org</a>
Marriage enrichment	All ministers and their spouses	<b>Marriage Encounter</b> <a href="http://www.wwme.org.uk">www.wwme.org.uk</a>
Marriage preparation	All ministers and their fiancés and fiancées	<b>Engaged Encounter</b> <a href="http://www.engagedencounter.org.uk">www.engagedencounter.org.uk</a>
Exploring your sexuality	All ministers and their families	<a href="http://www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk">www.onebodyonefaith.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.livingout.org">www.livingout.org</a> <a href="http://www.inclusive-church.org.uk">www.inclusive-church.org.uk</a>
Clergy spouse network	Partners of clergy	<a href="mailto:bishopofworcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk">bishopofworcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk</a>
Support for children with disabilities	All ministers	Various organisations, including: <a href="http://www.contact.org.uk">www.contact.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.arc-uk.org">www.arc-uk.org</a>
Support for children with autism	All ministers	Various organisations, including: <a href="http://www.autism.org.uk">www.autism.org.uk</a>

